

"QUITS."

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT

BY

ABBIE FARWELL BROWN

BOSTON

Walter H. Baker & Co.

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1906

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CHARACTERS.

KITTIE GOLDTHWAITE, *a Senior.*

GLADYS COURTENAY, *her Friend.*

MISS GRIFFIN, *Principal of White Elms Seminary.*

FRED OLNEY, *Cousin to Gladys.*

CHARLIE GOLDTHWAITE, *Kittie's Brother, in love with Gladys.*

SCENE. — Girl's Parlor at White Elms Seminary. Afternoon of the Senior Reception.

COSTUMES.

MISS GRIFFIN. — Dark dress, white kerchief and cap, glasses.

KITTIE. — First costume, as much like Miss Griffin's as possible. Rest of the play, silk waist and skirt.

GLADYS. — Pretty house dress.

MEN. — Ordinary afternoon costumes.

PROPERTIES.

Cap, spectacles, box of rouge, charcoal stick; two dress-suit cases; empty envelope, card; olives, crackers, tea-things, etc.

Time of representation, forty-five minutes.



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QUITS.

SCENE. — *Typical college-girls' room. Racquets, banjo, etc. Table R. C., with books and writing-materials; tea-table, L. U. E.; screen, L. C.; before it a divan and ottoman; chairs, R. and L.; mirror hung on wall, R. U. E. doors, R., L., and C.*

(GLADYS and MISS GRIFFIN discovered seated on the divan.)

MISS GRIFFIN. Yes, my dear. I shall be very happy to take tea with you and Katherine this afternoon and meet your young relatives. You say they are your brothers?

GLADYS. Our brother and cousin, Miss Griffin.

MISS G. Ah, you are relatives, then? I did not know that.

GLA. No; Kittie and I are not relatives — exactly. But Charlie — Mr. Goldthwaite, is her brother, and Fred Olney is my cousin.

MISS G. Ah, I see. (*Rising.*) Well, my dear, as I previously remarked, I shall be very glad to meet the young men. I should be most happy to stay with you now till they come, and give them a suitable reception to this institution, if my other duties were not so arduous. There are many necessary contingencies to be attended to, however, before the reception to-night, so I fear I must resign that pleasant task to you, my dear. (*KITTIE appears in costume in doorway, R.; GLADYS wildly waves her back, behind MISS GRIFFIN; KITTIE disappears again.*)

MISS G. But I shall be with you at six promptly. Pray present my compliments to the young gentlemen, and excuse my not being here to receive them. Good-afternoon, my dear. (*Exit, C.*)

GLA. Well, I am thankful she didn't insist upon staying, or we should have lost all our joke upon the boys, and perhaps have got into a scrape besides. (*KITTIE appears in doorway, R., again.*)

KIT. (*whispering*). Is she gone?

GLA. Yes; come in. But what a scare you gave me just now!

(*Enter KITTIE dressed like MISS GRIFFIN; tosses cap and spectacles into GLADYS's lap; minces about the stage affectedly.*)

KIT. Well, how do I look?

GLA. Capital. You are a beauty.

KIT. (*going to mirror, R. U. E.; posing before it*). I'm so glad

you like me. (*Imitating MISS GRIFFIN's drawl, and turning about.*) Do I sufficiently resemble my respected preceptress?

GLA. Good! There, screw your mouth like that again — more on the other side. (*KITTIE grimaces, attempting to imitate MISS GRIFFIN's puckered mouth.*)

KIT. I haven't quite got the hang of my mouth yet. Mine isn't really big enough. Now, I must have a few more wrinkles, and a more roseate nose. Where's the rouge? (*Goes to mirror, and begins lining in wrinkles with a charcoal stick.*)

GLA. (*crossing to table, R.*). Here it is. (*Handing rouge-box to KITTIE.*)

KIT. Mercy! Miss Griffin didn't see that box on the table, did she? She would think her academy was disgraced forever. Heavens! A rouge-box in my young ladies' room! Help — oh! (*She screams affectedly, and drops in a chair as if faint.*)

GLA. Nonsense! She didn't see it. Come, you must hurry, Kit, or they will be here. It is time for them now, unless they are looking around for Mabel and Emma. Hurry, dear, and compose your countenance. (*KITTIE springs up, and begins to smooth her hair before the mirror.*)

KIT. There, I am sure Charlie will never know me, he is so near-sighted. And as for your cousin (*turns about with rouge box in her hand, rubbing her nose as she speaks*), it is three years since I saw him last, and I hardly think he will suspect I have aged quite so fast, even from being deprived of his fascinating company; do you?

GLA. Oh, no. They will never suspect.

KIT. (*pausing, with a very red nose*). Horrors! You don't suppose he will think I have really grown old, do you? (*Turns to mirror and surveys herself.*)

GLA. Nonsense, you goose! He thinks you are a hard-hearted girl, and don't care anything about him.

KIT. Well, I don't. But —

GLA. They will never recognize you. Any one as stupid as they have been not to suspect us before of being the writers of all that nonsense to them will never dream you are any one but our respected principal, especially as they have never seen her.

KIT. I hope not. Just to have a bit of fun and tease them before showing up our magnificent joke of the past year — that is all I ask. Now, give me my cap. (*GLADYS helps her put on the cap.*) Is it becoming to my antiquated beauty? Te he! (*Giggles affectedly.*)

GLA. Oh, very! Fred will certainly fall directly in love with Miss Griffin, and forget all his former boyish admiration for you, Kittie.

KIT. As he did for Mabel, eh? (*Turning to glass.*) Don't you think my nose is a little too red, Gladys? I don't want to look too hideous.

GLA. Well, it is a trifle bibulous. (*KITTIE rubs it vigorously*

with handkerchief.) Oh, dear, Kit! I half dread to have you do it. We may get into a scrape yet, if Miss Griffin should take it into her head to come too early this afternoon.

KIT. Nonsense! She will be too busy. Besides, it is too late to back out now. The boys will be here in a few minutes, and I haven't had all the bother of this makeup for nothing; not a bit of it! Ahem, now my spectacles, my dear. (*Imitating MISS GRIFFIN; GLADYS hands her the glasses.*) Thank you, my child. Do I walk with a stately mien? (*Walks stiffly about; then suddenly breaks into a lively skirt-dance.*)

GLA. Kittie! Behave.

KIT. Well, I've no doubt she does that often when she's alone. Don't you think so?

GLA. Of course she doesn't. Fancy it! Now, Kittie, *do* be careful what you say. I don't want Charlie to be too angry with me. And don't, *don't* giggle, whatever you do, or they will be sure to recognize you.

KIT. (*indignantly*). Giggle! I should say not, or they will think it is *you*. I *never* giggle.

GLA. Oh, dear, do you know I am fearfully nervous. I can't help dreading lest something awful should happen this evening. I half believe Miss Griffin suspects something wrong now. I thought she looked queerly at me just now when I spoke of the boys.

KIT. Nonsense! You must have a bad eye. People seem always to look queer to you. So you have said all along, ever since we began to correspond with our brother and cousin under the names of Mabel Warren and Emma Smith. I don't see anything very wrong in that myself, especially when two of us—two of *you* are as good as engaged already.

GLA. You have no right to say that, Kittie. (*Pouting.*) But, my dear, don't you see it was the writing under assumed names that made it wrong. The boys didn't know who we were, and even when we wrote from *here*, saying we were anxious to correspond with two Harvard men, and had selected their names in the catalogue, they never suspected. If they had *known*—

KIT. It wouldn't have been any fun. Any one can receive love-letters from some one she *knows*. But, oh, dear! haven't they written some precious nonsense to Mabel and Emma—girls neither they nor any one else ever saw! I believe you are half jealous of Emma yourself, Gladys.

GLA. Charlie never wrote Emma such stuff as Fred did to Mabel. But you provoked him, anyway. Well, the whole thing was really your fault, Kittie, for you began it. But I am willing to take my half the blame—the *Emmaginary* half, you know.

KIT. (*grimly*). Ha, ha! I laugh. But, Gladys, see that you don't tell till to-night just before Miss Griffin comes, even if Charlie is most coaxing and nice. For he *can* be nice, I suppose, can't he?

GLA. (*musingly*). Oh, yes; he can.

KIT. We will keep them here, so they can't go exploring after Mabel and Emma and find out the secret too soon. Then, just as they are beginning to get nervous about meeting Miss Griffin, who they believe has found out Mabel and Emma are writing to them, *then* we will tell and beg to be forgiven. I hope they won't be hateful. (*Knock at the door.*)

GLA. Horrors! Here they are already. Run, Kittie, and *do* be careful what you say. Come in!

(*Exit KITTIE hurriedly, R., after a last glance in the mirror. Enter CHARLIE and FRED, C., with dress-suit cases which they leave L. C., in front of divan.*)

CHARLIE (*taking GLADYS'S hands*). Well, Gladys, I am so glad to see you. It seems years since last Christmas. Hello, I quite forgot Kit—where's Kit? Fred is just dying to see her, and resume that tender little acquaintance of three years ago,—aren't you, old man?

GLA. (*shaking hands with FRED*). I'm glad to see you, Fred. Kittie has gone out for a few moments to see one of the other girls, I think. She will be charmed to see you.

FRED (*eagerly*). Will she? I shall be very glad to renew my old acquaintance with Miss Goldthwaite. It is some time since I saw her, but I am sure I should know her anywhere.

GLA. Oh, she looks just the same as she used to, exactly. (*Nervously.*) She hasn't changed a *particle*.

CHAR. Only more sedate, I hope, as becomes a grave and reverend senior.

FRED (*fervently*). Oh, I hope *not*!

GLA. But you are seniors too.

CHAR. Well, aren't we grave and reverend?

GLA. Oh, *very*! And now, if you will excuse me a moment, I will go and find Kittie. I think I know just where she is. (*Exit hurriedly, R.*)

CHAR. (*standing, L., hands in pockets*). H'm! Not a very warm reception, I call it.

FRED. Oh, *very*! (*Mimicking GLADYS'S tone.*) Now, what the deuce did she mean by that? I believe they suspect something about Mabel and Emma.

CHAR. There's something queer about the whole thing, anyway. Why didn't those girls meet us at the station as they promised? Then we could have planned what to do this evening so as not to get confoundedly mixed with our two sets of cousins.

FRED. That Miss Griffin is a regular tartar, they say, and we have got to do it up brown for Mabel and Emma, as their brother and cousin, and lie like—freshmen, or the girls will be expelled, sure.

CHAR. Hang it! What the deuce did they want to write us those confounded letters on the sly for, anyway? And then get found out too. Just like girls!

FRED. Great fun it's going to be, appearing before the old griffiness to-morrow, and swearing we are Sammy Smith and Willie Warren, innocent relatives of those delightful dam-sels. I wonder what they look like, anyway.

CHAR. Oh, hang it! I don't know. Let's put all that off till to-morrow. I'm thinking what we shall say to the girls, *our* girls, when we tell them; for of course we shall have to tell them finally, so they won't introduce us at the reception as *their* brother and cousin.

FRED. Confound it! I forgot that. But don't let us give away all the trash we wrote those girls. It would be no go with Gladys and your sister after that. What the dickens shall we say, anyway? Hello, who's this?

(*Enter KITTIE, disguised as MISS GRIFFIN, and GLADYS, who hides behind the screen, popping out her head now and then.*)

KIT. (*pompously*). Good-afternoon, young gentlemen. You are the relatives of my young charges, Miss Goldthwaite and Miss Courtenay, I presume? (*Boys are embarrassed.*)

CHAR. (*aside*). What shall we say?

FRED. (*composedly*). No, ma'am; not exactly. We — that is, I — I am the brother of Miss Warren, Miss Mabel Warren. I am Sammy Smith.

KIT. Smith? Oh, *Smith*, you say!

CHAR. No, no. He means he is Sammy Warren. I am Willie Smith. I am Emma's cousin, Miss Emma Warren — I mean, Smith — Miss Emma Smith, you know, ma'am.

KIT. Ah! You don't seem quite sure of your own names, nor of your sister's name and your cousin's, young gentlemen. I fear there is something wrong here. (*Sternly.*)

CHAR. Oh, no, ma'am. I assure you not. If you would only let us see the girls themselves, we can prove it.

FRED. Yes; if we might see Mabel and Emma for a few moments, ma'am, we could clear up everything.

KIT. You are sure you can? (*Regarding FRED attentively.*) Now I think I *do* see a startling resemblance between yourself and Miss Warren. Is it the nose? No; she has a very nice nose indeed. The mouth? Ah, yes. I think it must be the mouth.

FRED. (*meekly*). Yes'm. They always said our mouths were very much alike. (*GLADYS laughs wildly behind screen; CHARLIE exploding on stage, L.*)

KIT. (*turning sharply to CHARLIE*). You, sir, what are you laughing at? You do not at all resemble your sister. She is quite a good-looking girl.

CHAR. Oh, madam, I never claimed to have a pretty mouth. We fellows who have to eat at "Memorial" believe in quantity rather than quality.

KIT. Memorial?

CHAR. Yes'm. Grub-place at Harvard, you know.

KIT. Ah, you are both from Harvard? Why, I wonder if you do not know the two young gentlemen whom I expect here to-night, the relatives of two others of my pupils — Miss Goldthwaite and Miss Courtenay — their brothers? They are from your university also.

CHAR. Never heard of them.

FRED. We are not acquainted with many of the upper class men. We are only freshmen ourselves.

KIT. Ah, I thought so. (*Boys look angry.*) Well, I daresay these men are not particularly well known in your college or you would have heard their names. I daresay they are very ordinary, like most young men; in fact, I am sure of it, though their sisters are extremely bright girls. (*Boys bow stiffly.*) I shall take pleasure in introducing your fellow-students to you this evening, when I have met them also. It is of them, in fact, that I shall desire to speak with you to-morrow in connection your sisters' correspondence. (*Boys make signs of woe to one another.*)

FRED (*weakly*). What? Our sisters?

KIT. (*sarcastically*). Oh, naturally you are unconscious of their transgressions. They probably did not see fit to inform *you* of their unladylike behavior. However, I will not consider this subject with you at present. I am too much occupied with other matters this afternoon, and wish to preserve my composure for this evening. I shall request your presence with your young relatives at my study early to-morrow forenoon. I will bid you good-evening, now, young gentlemen.

(*Exit KITTIE with low bow, c. As she goes out, drops box of rouge from her pocket, which FRED picks up.*)

FRED. Hello, the old lady has lost something. (*Examines it curiously.*) What is it, anyway — snuff?

CHAR. The deuce — no, it's rouge; and a good one on the griffin too, by Jove.

FRED. So the old lady indulges, does she? I thought so from the complexion of her nose. But, holy smoke, old man! what's to be done now? Here's a double mess. (*Contemplates the rouge sadly.*)

CHAR. The only thing to be done is to keep Gladys and Kit from introducing us to Miss Griffin to-night under our real names, or we are all done for.

FRED. That's so. (*Puts rouge in his pocket.*) If she gets too fresh, I'll just show her this. But first we must see Mabel and Emma, and consult with them. It won't do to go stumbling along in the dark without even having seen our hypothetical relatives.

CHAR. (*laughing*). Gad! Mabel "strongly resembles you, must be the mouth."

FRED. Don't you talk. How about your pretty sister who is fortunate enough to be entirely unlike you, eh?

CHAR. Thought we looked like freshmen! Daresay we don't

amount to much! I'd like to get even with that ancient female, I would.

FRED. But, I say, we must call on those girls — only how the dickens are we going to find them in this place? Shall we go along and knock on each door, (GLADYS, *behind screen, is horrified; exit hurriedly*) — or ring for the janitor, or ask the girls?

CHAR. No, no; don't do that. They would smell a rat. No, hang it! let's put off telling them as long as possible. At all events till I've had a chance to see Gladys alone.

FRED. Oh, you've got a little story of your own to tell her, have you, old man? I wish you joy of your explanation. Ugh! (*Shivers.*)

CHAR. Oh, you let me alone. Confound it, if ever we get out of this scrape we'll never write to any more girls on the sly, eh? I prefer Gladys myself. She used to write me good letters once. (*Sentimentally; strides up and down room, picks up an envelope from floor under the table, R.*) Hello! what's this? Why, here's a letter, or rather the husk of one, addressed to me. Mabel's writing too, and sealed with Kit's seal — broken open!

FRED (*going up to him*). I say, no fair reading private correspondence.

CHAR. It's addressed to me. By Jove, old man! I begin to — yes, that's it. (*Claps FRED on shoulder.*)

FRED (*impatiently*). Well, what is it? Can't say I see the joke.

CHAR. Why, you old donkey, see! (*Holds out the envelope.*) It's Kit's seal. She used it on Mabel's note by mistake. And it's Mabel's writing; Kit's disguised, of course. And Gladys is Emma, and Kit is Mabel, and you are an idiot, and I'm another. But isn't it a huge joke?

FRED. Yes; extremely colossal for the girls. But, O Lord! what do you suppose your sister thinks of the stuff I wrote Mabel? (*Mops his forehead violently.*) I wouldn't have had her see it for a farm.

CHAR. Yours were pretty steep, that's a fact. Do you remember that last one you began "My darling"?

FRED. Oh, rot! Shut up, will you? You can't say much yourself. (*Sits on divan moodily.*)

CHAR. What blamed jacks we were not to discover it before. Didn't know *that* writing — no kind of a disguise either. Oh, bang my head for me, will you?

FRED. With great pleasure, dear boy, if you will kick me. Oh, what idiots! But, hold on! Who *are* Mabel and Emma, anyway?

CHAR. Who are they? Why, no one, of course.

FRED. Don't you be so sure. Miss Griffin has a score against them anyway, for something, and we have got to explain to her about it all the same — deuce knows what, now we have said we were their brothers.

CHAR. Oh, I don't know anything about the whole business, anyway. But don't tell the girls yet; it's too good a joke on us. •

Maybe we can find some way to get out of it — make them think we knew all along, and get quits with them yet. Sh! Mum's the word now, old man. Here they come.

(*Enter GLADYS and KITTIE in ordinary house-gown. KITTIE greets CHARLIE affectionately, shakes hands with FRED very formally; GLADYS and CHARLIE stand back, R.; FRED and KITTIE sit on divan, L. C.*)

KIT. Did you think I was never coming? I am so sorry to have kept you waiting.

FRED. You have kept me waiting three years now, isn't it? And it seems even longer. (*GLADYS and CHARLIE converse apart.*)

KIT. (*merrily*). Does it? Why, it seems only yesterday to me that we used to go out fishing in the old trout brook.

FRED. And rowing in the moonlight and walking at dusk. You haven't forgotten that too, have you?

KIT. Oh, mercy, yes. I forget all those silly things I used to do. Why, I was only a freshman then.

FRED. And now you are fresher, rosier, sweeter than ever, if that could be.

KIT. And you too are at least *fresher* than ever, it appears.

FRED. I am tempted to be.

KIT. Hush! I am very dignified and circumspect nowadays. You would hardly know me, I am so prim.

FRED. You don't look it, by Jove.

KIT. Now you are laughing at me. (*Pouts.*) But there — do not let us begin by being silly again. We are too old for this nonsense now. (*Puts on a grave air.*) But why didn't you get here sooner? We have expected you a long time — hem! haven't we, Gladys?

(*GLADYS and CHARLIE start; GLADYS crosses over to KITTIE; when the boys are not looking wipes a wrinkle from her face.*)

GLA. (*aside to KITTIE*). You didn't get it all off. (*Aloud.*) Yes, indeed. Where have you been?

CHAR. (*trying to appear embarrassed*). Why, you see —

FRED (*crossing over to CHARLIE, R.*). We had our baggage to look after, you know.

KIT. (*suspiciously*). But it couldn't have taken you all this time.

FRED. Er — well — that is, I had an errand to attend to.

GLA. An *errand* — here in Elmwood? Well, that *is* queer!

KIT. And you, Charlie; did you have an errand too, or was it the same one? Why, you are as bad as Mabel and Emma. (*Boys start; girls laughing at one another.*)

GLA. Why, what have Mabel and Emma been doing now?

CHAR. (*aside to FRED*). Good heavens! How much of this is bluff, anyway?

FRED (*aside*). Well, give 'em as good as they send.

KIT. (*watching the boys*). Oh, I suspect they had some errand at the station as usual, to meet some one.

FRED (*aside; relieved*). All bluff!

CHAR. Is that what you girls do up here? Well, you *are* a bashful, timid little lot, aren't you? Kit, I suppose you do that too, when you are not expecting brothers on the train.

KIT. Me? Oh, never! (*Horried.*) But they, oh, they are always getting into scrapes. (*Boys start again.*)

GLA. Why, what have they done now?

KIT. Oh, got into some mess or other with Miss Griffin. They *say* they are all right, and haven't done anything wrong, and can prove it too. But you know they have said that before.

CHAR. (*aside*). If that is all bluff, they're doing it mighty well.

FRED. Who are these fair maids? I am quite curious about them. Shall we meet them? They must be very interesting girls.

KIT. Oh, they are. I should think you would be "curious to meet any one so freshly original, bright, and charmingly interesting." (*FRED starts.*)

FRED (*aside*). Extract from my last confounded letter.

CHAR. Oh, come now! Introduce us this evening, will you, girls? They must be great larks.

GLA. (*disgustedly*). Just the kind men always like. But we don't see much of them here. They are not our style exactly. Very different from us.

CHAR. Yes? I should *hope* so!

KIT. (*quickly*). Oh, you seem to know something about them too. Why, pray, are you so very emphatic?

CHAR. (*feigning embarrassment*). Well, to tell the truth, we *had* heard of them.

FRED. Yes. You see some fellows at college —

GLA. Yes, yes. Well?

FRED. Well, they corresponded with some men at Harvard on the sly, you see. Fellows were perfectly disgusted, but couldn't get out of it. And they say these girls wrote the most sickening letters — the worst trash! (*FRED winks aside to CHARLIE; girls are indignant.*)

GLA. Oh, they *did*. Trash, did they?

FRED. Yes — utter bosh!

KIT. Hum! What did the men write? I suppose theirs was *sense*.

FRED (*carelessly*). Oh, they just gulled the girls with nonsense. But the poor things were completely taken in, you know.

CHAR. Yes, by Jove. Such geese!

KIT. Perhaps they weren't such geese as the men thought.

FRED. Oh, but they were, though.

GLA. You seem to know an awful lot about it. I think there's something queer about this story, don't you, Kittie?

FRED. Oh, they read a lot of extracts aloud to us and the other fellows at the club. My, it was rich!

CHAR. Emma's were the best, though. Jove, she must be a stunner!

GLA. Why, they were —

KIT (*aside*). Sh! Let them talk. (*Aloud.*) I smell a rat somewhere. I believe you boys know more about this than you pretend, and have been up to some mischief. But we *will* introduce you to them this evening, and to Miss Griffin too. Oh, by the way, she is coming to take tea with us in about half an hour. (*Boys start violently.*)

FRED. Oh, didn't we tell you? We've met her already.

GLA. Oh you *have*? Well, then, you won't have to be introduced.

CHAR. No, don't introduce us — don't.

KIT. Why not?

FRED (*aside to CHARLIE*). Now, you've done it. (*Aloud.*) I say, I don't believe we can stay to tea with you, even with the extra inducement of seeing Miss Griffin again. We have got to call on some friends of ours, and then get ready for this evening, you know.

GLA. But you must be famished now; why didn't we think of it before.

CHAR. Well, we are a little — faint.

KIT. Oh, you must stay to tea with us. We have got it all ready for you. You mustn't leave us now. Miss Griffin will be here in a little while.

FRED. Awfully good of you to ask us, but —

GLA. But if we are going to get you anything we must be preparing it now. If you will excuse us a moment we will get it ready. (*Aside to KITTIE.*) We mustn't let them go hunting for Mabel and Emma. Let's tell as soon as we come back. (*Exit GLADYS and KITTIE, R. CHARLIE falls into chair, R., overcome with laughter; FRED stands, L., chuckling.*)

FRED. Well, we got out of that pretty well. Now, let's get out of this, and find who the bogus girls are.

CHAR. Good idea. Before we meet the old cat again under our real names.

FRED. But we must give them one last scare before confessing, when we come back, for of course we must confess before we go to that confounded reception.

CHAR. Holy smoke! Yes. I don't much fancy the prospect, though.

FRED. Um! Neither do I. But I think I can make Kittie listen to reason.

CHAR. To *treason*, you mean. They'll be sure to call it so.

FRED. Can't help it. They began it. But we must be quick or they will be back. (*Thinks.*) Hello! I have it. Let's make them think Miss Griffin is onto their own dodge.

CHAR. Good work! But how shall we do it?

FRED (*takes out card and scribbles on it at the table, R.; tosses it on table, where CHARLIE reads it*). This is to explain our sudden departure. Now, then, we'll write a note to the girls pretending to come from Miss Griffin, and leave it here under the door as we go out. We'll say she has found out their clandestine correspondence, and requests to see them after the reception in regard to their future health. Here we go. (*Sits at table, and writes rapidly; business tumbling over papers, etc.*)

CHAR. I say, that's pretty rough on them.

FRED (*scribbling rapidly*). Oh, we'll go away for half an hour and then come back and explain. I guess the girls will be ready to knock down by that time. Here we are. (*CHARLIE reads note over his shoulder. They fold and address it, placing it under door, C.*)

CHAR. Put your card here. Hello, you've signed it Sammy Smith.

FRED. I know it — they'll think I forgot, you know. Lapse of memory — absent-mindedness — love.

CHAR. Stand it up here on this book so they will be sure to see it. (*Places it conspicuously on table, R.*)

FRED. Now let's get out of here quick. Jove! here they come now; hustle. (*Exeunt hurriedly, C.*)

(*Enter MISS GRIFFIN, L.*)

MISS G. What's this? I thought I saw two young men leave the room just as I entered. But I must have been mistaken, of course. But where can the young ladies be? I don't see any signs of them, though they very properly invited me here to tea to meet their brother and cousin — or at least, I believe more correctly, the brother of one and the cousin of the other. (*She discovers the card on the table.*) Ah, some one has been here. I thought so. Mr. Olney — oh, yes. He must be the cousin. But why should he hurry away so fast when I entered, as if there were something wrong? I don't understand this. (*Examines card, shaking head; looks startled; adjusts glasses.*) He has written something. It is right that I should see what, of course. I cannot have any doubts as to my girls' callers. (*Reads, showing increasing horror.*) What language! What sentiments! (*Reads aloud.*) "Excuse haste. We'll get our tea somewhere. Don't want to meet the Griffin again." Do they mean *me*? "Going to call on Mabel and Emma. Sorry to skip. Give our love to the Griffin. Tell her we'll see her later — at the swarry, perhaps. Ta-ta. Sammy Smith." This is disgusting! But is this young person who expresses himself so colloquially and disrespectfully in truth Mr. Olney or Sammy Smith? I do not understand it. There is certainly something wrong here. Can my girls be deceiving me, and are these not their own brother and cousin after all? (*She walks nervously across room, discovers boys' dress-suit cases, L.*) Their satchels

too! How very indelicate — in my girls' parlor! I must go and find them. (*Starts out of door C.; finds note, comes forward in front of screen L. with it.*) A note, too, evidently left by the same youths. (*Sternly.*) I must certainly read this. If there is anything wrong, I owe it to the young ladies and to their parents to investigate this matter. (*Begins to read. Door C. opens softly, and FRED looks in. Not seeing her behind screen, enters, beckoning CHARLIE, who also enters. They tiptoe down centre; business; grab dress-suit cases, when MISS GRIFFIN sees them, and screams.*)

MISS G. (*indignantly*). What does this mean, sirs?

FRED. We — we came back for — for our boxes.

CHAR. We — we forgot them.

MISS G. Oh, you forgot them. And where are you going now, pray, and who are you, anyway, young gentlemen?

FRED. Why, as we told you, we are Sammy Smith and Willie Warren, and we are going now to see our cousins.

MISS G. You are going to see *whom*?

CHAR. Yes'm. Our cousins. They are waiting for us now. And if you will excuse us, ma'am, we really must hurry.

FRED. Good-afternoon, ma'am. (*Produces box of rouge.*) Oh, here is something I think you dropped, ma'am. (*Exit boys hurriedly, C.*)

MISS G. Impudence! As if I used rouge with my complexion! (*Surveys herself in mirror.*) But what does this mean? Who are these Sammy Smiths and Willie Warrens? Going to see their *cousins*. Um! Then their cousins don't live *here*, evidently. I must examine this note; perhaps that will explain the mystery. (*Opens and reads note hurriedly.*) "Miss Griffin requests to see the Misses Goldthwaite and Courtenay in her room at seven o'clock promptly, in regard to their reprehensible conduct in corresponding with two strange young men under assumed names." Can it be my girls would do such a thing? I cannot believe it. And yet — what do these strange actions mean — these young men who don't know their own names, though they seem to have two apiece? (*Looks at note.*) They *dared* to use my name! "Love to the Griffin!" Preposterous! I shall look into this further. The young ladies shall receive a duplicate of this scandalous note — a genuine one this time, from myself. And we shall see — (*Stops suddenly. Enter GLADYS and KITTIE, R., with tea-tray, cakes, tea, olives, etc., which they place on table, L. U. E.*)

GLA. Why, where are — (*Looks about wonderingly.*)

KIT. (*aside*). Sh!

MISS G. (*coldly*). Good-evening, young ladies. I fear I came before you were ready to receive me. It is earlier than you asked me to come, I know. But I only came to tell you that I have other and *very important* business this afternoon which will detain me until the reception, so I cannot, as I promised, take tea with you and your — relatives, who are evidently not here at present. You will excuse me, I am sure. (*Bows stiffly, and exit, C.*)

GLA. Well, what does this mean? (*Drops in chair, R.*) Don't you think she was awfully stiff, even for *her*? Do you suppose she suspects anything?

KIT. (*munching cracker*). Mercy, no. She is just nervous over the excitement of to-night, and the prospect of meeting some real, live, young men has quite upset her—oh, dear! (*Giggles affectedly.*) But where are *our* men?

GLA. That's what I want to know.

KIT. Folded their grips like the Arab and silently stolen away. I hope they haven't stolen anything else. (*Looks about the room suspiciously.*)

GLA. I should think they were polite. What does it mean?

KIT. Well, it evidently means that they weren't as hungry as they pretended, for one thing. And they can't find any night lunch anywhere else in this benighted town, that's one comfort. Oh, I'll be quits with him yet for his hateful remarks about those letters!

GLA. Well, we sha'n't have any guests for tea to-night it seems, now all the birdies have flown.

KIT. I'm glad of it—all the more left for us. Have an olive, do. (*Goes to table again, and passes olives to GLADYS.*) I'm as hungry as a bear.

GLA. He might at least have left his card. Mercy, Kittie! They must have gone to find out about Mabel and Emma. They will inquire—oh, supposing they had met Miss Griffin and asked *her*.

KIT. Perhaps they *did*.

GLA. Oh, do you suppose so—and that was why she looked so queer? Oh, dear, Kittie. What shall we do?

(*Tap on door, C.; KITTIE rises and receives note from outside. Comes down centre with it.*)

KIT. A note addressed to you and me. It must be from the boys to explain. (*GLADYS comes and reads over her shoulder.*)

GLA. No, it isn't. It's from Miss Griffin. I know that writing. Read it, Kittie, quick.

KIT. (*reading*). "Miss Griffin requests to see the Misses Courtenay and Goldthwaite in her room at six in regard to their highly unladylike conduct in corresponding with two young men under assumed names." (*Looks at watch.*) And it's past five now.

GLA. (*falls into a chair, R., sobbing*). I *knew* it!

KIT. (*pacing the room distractedly*). How did she ever find out? How *did* she?

GLA. It was those b-b-boys! (*Sobs.*)

KIT. (*defiantly*). Well, it is nothing to be ashamed of, anyway. They are our brother and cousin.

GLA. But she won't believe it. O Kittie, she won't let us go to the reception to-night. And we shall be expelled. I *know*

we shall. So near to graduation too. And my dress is all done, and — and everything. Charlie will be *so* disgusted. (*Buries her head on the table.*)

KIT. (*scornfully*). Charlie! Who cares about Charlie?

GLA. (*weakly*). I do.

KIT. Well, I don't. But he and Mr. Olney have got to get us out of this scrape somehow. I don't see how, I'm sure. Papa and mamma mustn't know it. Oh, dear! what shall we do? But don't cry, Gladys dear. (*Goes over; kneels down and puts arms around GLADYS.*) I — I know it will come out all right someway. (*Sobs on GLADYS'S shoulder. Enter CHARLIE and FRED softly, c.*)

FRED (*aside*). By Jove! Affecting tableau! Two Niobes all tears.

CHAR. (*aside*). I say, it's too rough on her — poor little thing. I can't stand it; I'm going to tell.

FRED. Yes; it's gone far enough, I think. Ahem!

(*Girls start up mopping eyes; try to seem calm.*)

CHAR. What is the matter, Gladys? (*Goes up and takes her hands.*)

GLA. O Charlie! (*Hides her head on his shoulder.*)

KIT. Oh, it's nothing at all. Just an amusing little joke; a *very* funny one.

FRED. Oh, a *joke*, is it? I love jokes.

KIT. Yes; I should say you did. We *all* do. I'm very fond of them.

FRED. Glad you are. I'm something of a joke myself.

KIT. A pretty poor one, then. (*Turns her back on him.*)

CHAR. Well, come then, and tell me all about it, Gladys. Come out here in the little bay-window. I've got a little joke to tell you too, that I've been waiting to spring for some time. (*Exeunt CHARLIE and GLADYS, door L.*)

FRED (*calling after them*). I say, Charlie, don't forget to tell her everything — the *whole* joke, see? (*To KITTIE.*) He looks Glad-is she is sad, doesn't he?

KIT. Well, I think it is about time to have done with joking. (*Sits on divan, L.*) I've had enough of it to last some time — till six o'clock, anyway.

FRED. That's only five minutes. Why six? Why not seven, eight, nine? Why are you so gloomy, Kittie? I may call you that, may I not? We are such old friends. (*Sits in chair, R.*)

KIT. (*pettishly*). Oh, don't call me anything. O Mr. Olney, forgive me if I am cross, but —

FRED. You are not cross. You are charming as ever, Kittie.

KIT. Yes, I am. But we are in a dreadful scrape, Gladys and I. And it is partly your fault too.

FRED. *My* fault? Then I'm sure it can't be a *very* bad scrape. Maybe it isn't half so bad as you think.

KIT. Oh, but it *is*. And you must help us to think how to get out of it, Fred—Mr. Olney.

FRED. I will, with all my heart. Now tell us all about it.

KIT. (*hesitating*). In the first place, I want to know if you—if you would forgive any one who had played a joke on you—a practical joke which seemed very funny at first, but which turned out to be—not so amusing after all. Could you forgive any one?

FRED. I don't know as I could forgive *any one*, but I certainly would forgive you, Kittie; especially if you looked at me like that.

KIT. (*seriously*). And would you try to help her out of the scrape she had got herself and you into, and never be hateful, or nagging, or revengeful afterwards, as men always are?

FRED. I might want to tease her a bit, so as to be quits, you know. I might want to deceive her a little in return, perhaps. But I shouldn't be a lifelong enemy, I hope. But, tell me, what would you do if any one deceived you in return? Would you as magnanimously forgive him?

KIT. Oh, don't argue with me now. Of course *I* would take a joke. But I really am in earnest, for once. It was a great temptation; men are so easily deceived. (*Sighs.*)

FRED. Ah, yes; and women are *so* sharp. (*Sighs.*)

KIT. Well, then, I am going to tell you something awful—something that isn't funny a bit, though I thought it was once. (*Sobs.*)

FRED (*aside*). Bless her! (*Aloud; rising and standing before her.*) No; you shall not tell me. You have promised to be forgiving yourself. Hear *me* first.

KIT. No; I must tell you. It is time the truth was told, and I am going to do it now.

FRED (*sitting on ottoman at end of sofa*). Very well; say on, fair oracle. I am all ears, as my mother said when I was a baby.

KIT. (*confusedly*). Well—I am Mabel Warren. I wrote all those trashy letters to you. Gladys was Emma—and it was an awful thing to do—and we've been found out—awful scrape—got to go to Miss Griffin at six—and we shall be expelled. Oh, dear, Fred, what shall we do? Isn't it awful? And oh—can you forgive us and not think us silly, mean, unladylike, contemptible girls?

FRED (*calmly*). Certainly not. Why, I knew that—knew it all along. Big joke on you girls, but *we* weren't fooled.

KIT. (*gasping*). Weren't fooled? You don't mean—

FRED. But I do, certainly. You don't suppose we were such geese—ha, ha! But now *I* must confess. *We* wrote that note from Miss Griffin in revenge. It's all right; she doesn't know anything about it, though she came pretty near it. I thought when she came in, and we told her—

KIT. (*laughing*). But that's the best joke of all. You *were* cheated. That wasn't Miss Griffin at all, but *I*, dressed up.

FRED (*amazed*). You dressed up! You don't mean it. Well,

we *were* sold. I don't know who got the best of it, after all. But, Kittie, I am honestly dreadfully sorry we frightened you so. You poor little thing! You look all worn out and tired. (*He takes her hand.*)

KIT. (*drooping her head*). It was a very mean trick.

FRED. Yes, it was, Kittie. But now you will be good as you promised, and forgive me, won't you?

KIT. I don't see how you could be so cruel. (*Snatches away her hand.*) Gladys was dreadfully frightened. You and Charlie were *mean* to her. But don't flatter yourself that I was frightened — no indeed! But I am *angry*. (*Rises indignantly and turns away.*) I can never forgive you for this, Mr. Olney.

FRED. Ah, but you said you would. You cannot be truly angry. It was only a joke, and hasn't really hurt any one after all.

KIT. It has hurt my feelings. (*He tries to take her hand; she retreats across the room behind table.*) Let me go! I must find Charlie and tell him what I think of you two Harvard gentlemen.

FRED. Ah, Kittie, don't be angry with me. It is so long since I have seen you, and now to have our very first meeting spoiled by such a silly cause as this.

KIT. Silly! I should say so! Think of those letters you wrote Mabel. (*FRED groans, and gestures in despair behind her.*)

FRED. Oh, hang it, Kittie! I was thinking only of you when I wrote those. You would never write to me when I asked you. (*Reproachfully.*)

KIT. I was only a little girl then. It wouldn't have been proper.

FRED. But you wrote as *Mabel*. Ah, Kittie, I see in your eyes that you are not really angry.

KIT. The idea!

FRED. The eye-dear; just what I think, but I should never dare to say it. (*Advances to her around the table; she retreats, keeping always on the side away from him. Business.*)

KIT. But you *did* say it. Mr. Olney, this is growing embarrassing. You mustn't forget that I am no longer Mabel, though I suppose I shall have only myself to blame if you do occasionally forget — after those dreadful letters. (*Crosses room, and sits on divan.*)

FRED. Those *charming* letters. (*Follows her, standing close beside her.*) But I shall never confound Mabel with you. (*Aside.*) Confound *her*! (*Aloud.*) And now, Kittie, since you have forgiven me — you have, you know.

KIT. Have I?

FRED. Oh, yes. But will you not prove it?

KIT. Why, have I not already proved it by not running away from you long ago? You deserve to be punished even more severely. Tell me, is not my hair quite white? The anxiety of this night has been enough to blanch it. (*Enter MISS GRIFFIN, C., unperceived, behind screen.*)

FRED. I think not, as well as I can see from here. May I come where I can see better?

KIT. Mabel would let you, but I don't think I should.

FRED (*sitting beside her*). Play you are Mabel, then. Do you know, I am really very fond of Mabel — I feel quite inclined to play the devoted brother of Mabel — as Sammy Smith. (*Leans forward to kiss her*; MISS GRIFFIN *appears suddenly from behind screen, C.*; KITTIE *screams*; *tableau*.)

MISS G. Sammy Smith! What does this mean? (*Sternly*.) Katherine Goldthwaite, is this your brother or your cousin? (*Points to him dramatically*.)

KIT. Oh — it — it's — Mr. Olney.

MISS G. (*to FRED*). Are you her cousin?

FRED. No, ma'am. But —

MISS G. That's enough! (*To KITTIE*.) I told you to come to me at six. As you failed to appear, I came here for you. And very glad I am that I did so. You forgot my note, it seems. (*Both start*.) I will speak to you, Mr. — Olney, and the other young man first. Katherine, go into that room till I send for you. (*Exit KITTIE, R.*; FRED *crosses, R.*)

MISS G. Now, sir, what have you to say for yourself, and where is your partner in this disgraceful affair, and the other misguided girl?

FRED. I — I really don't know, ma'am. But if you will allow me to go I think I can find them. (*Enter CHARLIE and GLADYS, L., looking happy*.)

CHAR. (*seeing MISS GRIFFIN, who is back towards him. Aside to GLADYS*). Oh, there she is, dressed up as the old lady again. Well, have you made it up yet, Kit? You make up as a fine chaperon, anyway, old lady — quite out-griffin the Griffin. (*He goes up to MISS GRIFFIN, throws his arm around her neck, and kisses her heartily. MISS GRIFFIN screams, turns about. Consternation of all. Enter KITTIE, R.*)

MISS G. What does this mean — adding insult to injury! Sir! Approach me again at your peril. Why, are you all raving crazy? Girls, girls, what does this mean? How could you? (*Weeps in handkerchief*.)

KIT. (*taking one of her hands*). O Miss Griffin! If you would only listen. (*She is pushed away*.)

GLA. (*taking other hand*). We can explain it all, really.

MISS G. (*pushing her away*). Explain! This is beyond explanation. It cannot be explained.

CHAR. Oh, yes, it can, ma'am, indeed. I am Sam — Charlie Goldthwaite, and I am Kittie's brother. (*Takes GLADYS's hand*.)

FRED. And I am Frederic S. Olney, Miss Griffin, a Harvard senior. I can prove that too, and Gladys's cousin. (*Takes KITTIE's hand*.)

KIT. Yes, Miss Griffin, and it is only they to whom we have been writing.

GLA. Our own brother and cousin. (MISS GRIFFIN *uncovers her eyes, looks at them askance.*)

MISS G. Your brother and cousin! (Boys drop girls' hands suddenly.) So you wrote to them under assumed names? And who, pray, are "Mabel and Emma"?

KIT. Oh, they *aren't* — they didn't exist at all, so they did nothing wrong.

MISS G. And who are — ugh! "Sammy and Willie"?

CHAR. Oh, they don't exist either. They are just dead stuck on the two mythical girls — that's all. (MISS GRIFFIN *glares contemptuously at him, and he wilts.*)

MISS G. Say it as you will, young ladies, it was a very unlady-like proceeding to write to *any* young men in such a way. *Very* reprehensible. It cannot be overlooked in justice to myself and to the reputation of my school. Even if you each wrote only to her own relative — which I surmise was not the case — it would have been wrong, *very* wrong to deceive any one so. I could not have forgiven it under any circumstances. (*Hesitates.*) Unless, indeed, you were engaged to the young men. In which case —

CHAR. (*quickly*). But we are engaged. We are — are we not, Gladys?

GLA. (*bashfully*). Yes, Miss Griffin, Charlie and I are engaged. (*Others exchange looks.*)

FRED (*looking appealingly at KITTIE*). And — and so are we. Are we not, Kittie?

KIT (*starting; then timidly*). Why — yes, we are engaged.

MISS G. Engaged — all of you? Why, how long has this been so?

CHAR. (*boldly*). Oh, a long time. (*Aside to GLADYS.*) Half an hour, isn't it?

MISS G. Well, why didn't you say so sooner, you four foolish young people, and save all this trouble and misunderstanding? I suppose now I shall have to overlook all these really scandalous proceedings. But, Mr. Goldthwaite, there is one thing I cannot forgive (*sternly*), — your very reprehensible greeting of me just now, which I blush to recall. Sir, this is something that you cannot explain. It was a personal insult to me. (*All look anxious.*)

CHAR. (*eagerly*). Oh, no, madam; no, indeed. I thought certainly that you were Kittie, I assure you, or nothing should have tempted me to such a liberty. You looked exactly like her as I entered, figure, head, pose, — everything. And seeing you together I do not wonder at my mistake. There is a strong, a *very* strong resemblance. (*Grimaces aside to KITTIE. All bob their heads eagerly in agreement; KITTIE alone is angry. FRED whispers to her; she smiles.*)

MISS G. (*highly pleased*). Well, well, if you have so good an excuse, we will let it pass, then. But I shall be on my guard the next time, Mr. Sammy. (*Coquettishly; CHARLIE bows low.*) And now, young people, you must be faint with hunger. You shall all

come and take tea with *me*, this time, and then we will go to the reception together.

(MISS G. *goes towards door*, C.; CHARLIE and GLADYS *following*, R.; FRED and KITTIE *in front*, L., *facing audience*.)

FRED (*taking KITTIE'S hands*). At last, then, Kittie dear, we are quits, are we not? It *was* a good joke.

KIT. But I think you have the best of it after all — you have *me*.

CURTAIN.